

# Education matters: From Possibilities to



**T**he growth of St. Francis Methodist School first starts with a vision – a vision to transform their possibilities to realities, a vision to nurture the students towards success.



## **Interview with Mr. Andrew Ponniah**

According to Mr. Andrew Ponniah, Director, Planning, Marketing & HR Departments, what sets St. Francis Methodist School apart from other schools are their belief in nurturing the five dimensions of each student namely the intellectual, physical, social, moral and emotional. Each student is given an opportune position to give of their best in an environment that is safe and well cared for. In St. Francis Methodist School, there is a Counselling and Care Department which focuses on providing general Counselling, academic counseling and Christian counseling. In each area, teachers will work closely with the Counselling and Care Department to ensure that each student is provided with the necessary support and guidance to achieve his or her goals in order to secure a vibrant and successful future.

Mr. Ponniah has been with St. Francis for almost a decade and has been directly involved in moulding St. Francis into what it is today and is still striving to bring it further in terms of Business Excellence. With his wealth of experience and his education, he is now responsible for the promotion of the school to both the local and overseas markets.

## **Unique heritage of St. Francis**

At St. Francis students are equipped with an academic education that paves the way for subsequent specialization at tertiary level. Students are also taught to discern and make wise choices and finally students also acquire life skills like sensitivity to other cultures and beliefs having a multi-national and multi-cultural demographics in the school and learning to communicate well and to value friendship.

# Realities



The school became a Methodist school in 1995 when the license was donated to the Methodist Church In Singapore. It serves a unique role amongst Methodist schools by reaching out to Pan-Asian students in the region with English-focused curricula and inventive pedagogy.

## Accomplishments

St. Francis is the leader in private academic education in Singapore providing a rich diversity of courses that cater to the needs of a new generation of students. They obtained the prestigious Singapore Quality Class Award for Private Education Organisations (SQC for PEOs) in June 2003 and ISO 9001:2000 certification in August the same year. In 2004 they have been awarded the People Developer in January and the Innovation Class in November. CaseTrust and BS7799 were added this year. The new slogan **"Possibilities to Realities"** was adopted to show their commitment in providing a world class quality education that allow students to fulfill their dream through education.

In the year 2006 it will place all Pre-University program under an internal division - SF Academy. This division offers:

- London Examinations GCE 'A' Level (Business)
- Singapore-Cambridge GCE 'A' Level Programme
- The Australian Matriculation Programme for tertiary entrance examination
- St. Francis Baccalaureate (endorsed by Southwestern College, Kansas, USA)
- BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business (through a special partnership with Bradford Business School, UK).

**The BTEC Higher National Diploma (Business)** is administered by Edexcel, the BTEC HND (Business). It comprises a two year programme that is designed to equip youth the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in current or future employment or for progression to an undergraduate degree. Upon completion of and passing all modules in the HND, they will be granted a place in the third year degree study at Bradford Business School where they will attain a B. A. Business Studies (Honors) from the Leeds Metropolitan University.

**By 2007**, the school hopes to run classes for students with mild learning difficulties thus rendering St. Francis to be the first private school to open such classes to overseas students. The school is also looking to be a venue for evening classes for a Certificate In Counselling programme run by James Cook University.

## Funding at St. Francis

Although St. Francis does not receive funding from the Ministry of education and all their programs are self generating they have maintained an affordable fee for both local and overseas students. Fees are \$11,000 per annum, which is \$6-9000.00 cheaper than international schools and there is 20% subsidy for local students. There has been huge intake of overseas students. Full time home stay arrangements can be made. At the moment, students from China, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Australia and Vietnam are studying in this school.

## Demographics of students

Local – 30%  
Chinese – 20%

Vietnamese – 12%  
Indonesians – 10%  
Koreans – 7%  
Balance – other countries.

What sets them apart from the main stream education is also the fact that at St. Francis the education is not rigid, nor homogeneous. 40% of the curriculum comes from overseas. A mentoring program for students will also be introduced next year where each student will spend 10 hours with the external mentor.

**Zhu YiLin** a girl from PRC who completed her 'A' Levels at St. Francis went on to complete her Bachelors in Computer Science at the National University of Singapore (NUS) this year. She liked St. Francis so much that she has opted to join the school as a full-time teacher in Chinese Language and Information Technology. She is one of many success stories in St. Francis.

St. Francis is working with an overseas partner to set up an Innovation Lab in the school where research into innovative teaching methods, structure and methodology will be captured and shared. New approaches to creative thinking will also be encouraged.

St. Francis hopes to continue in its pursuit of Business Excellence and provision of world-class quality education and Mr. Ponniah and his team of staff hopes to bring its education in St. Francis Methodist School to another level of excellence. He will continuously pilot the school towards delivery of better results and growth.

Insist on St. Francis Methodist School – the private school that gives a holistic educational program to help steer your child towards success.  
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